KUGUTSU

volume 03 chapter 08

Scanned by *Kalendel*
Translated by *Sagami*
Proofread by *Dethlaryn*
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STORM IN HEAVEN

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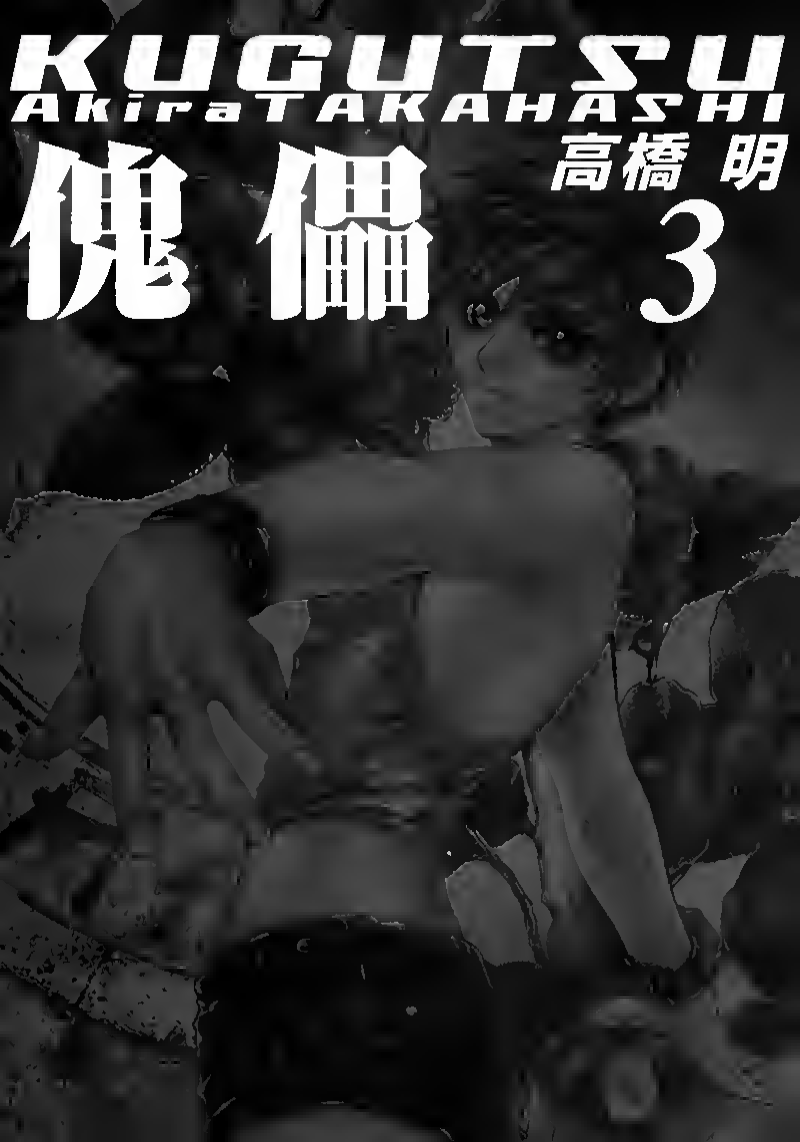
KUGUTSU
AkiraTAKAHASHI
高橋 明
傀儡
3

C O N T E N T S

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WHO'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT, NIMIYA?
THE ONE WHO RESCUED ME FROM THAT DARK PLACE.
GRAND-PA...
WHERE'D THAT PERSON GO?
ACT.8
NO ONE WILL LOCK YOU UP EVER AGAIN.
I'LL PROTECT YOU.
THE DOLL MAKER... WON'T COME BACK EVER AGAIN
SO... FORGET IT ALL.

ACT.

clank
HAIRAN?

I FOUND IT.

creak
THE FIRST POINT...
BUT WE FINALLY FOUND ONE OF THE SIX POINTS! ONE OF THE GUARDIAN SPIRITS...
ONE OF THE THREE YANG POINTS... THE HERETICAL BOX!
HAIRAN ...?

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ALL THIS TIME?
IS THE OLD MAN HEADING THE COMMISSION OF GUARDIANS ANGRY?
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME...
SHIKIGAMI MASTER FU XIAO...
INDEED. I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU.
COME WITH ME.
DOLL MAKER... HAIRAN.

...IT'S NOTHING, I JUST HAVE A HEADACHE
ELECTRICIAN?
SO... ARE YOU SAYING THAT IT WAS THIEU'S DOING?
LIAM'S BODY WAS SO MUTILATED BEYOND RECOGNITION YOU'D THINK A GORILLA RIPPED HIM TO SHREDS... THE TERRIBLE STATE THAT ROOM WAS
I'M THINKING THAT THE MURDERER IS PROBABLY THE SAME ONE THAT I RAN INTO AT LIAM'S PAL'S LAIR.
AND FROM THE BLOODY HANDPRINTS LEFT AT THE SCENE OF CRIME IT WAS CLEARLY A CHILD
AND I'VE SEEN THAT MARK BEFORE... IT WAS A MONSTER!

DAMN... AND THINGS HAD CALMED DOWN FOR A WHILE...
CAN YOU DENY THAT?
THE DOLL MAKER WHO CREATED IT IS NO LAUGHING MATTER. IT'S BEST TO LIE LOW AND OBSERVE THE SITUATION.
SO LET'S SAY THAT MONSTER REALLY WAS A DOLL. WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE WE DO NOW?
AND? YOU THINK THAT MONSTER WAS A DOLL?
I BET YOU'RE JUST AFRAID
YOU'RE JUST SCARED OF HAVING UNKNOWN, SUSPICIOUS PEOPLE SURFACING AND SWITCHING UP THE SITUATION AREN'T YOU?
ARE YOU TRYING TO PICK A FIGHT?

WELL, YOU DIDN'T WANT TO DEAL WITH THIS FROM THE VERY BEGINNING ANYWAY
h2h2...
I'M NOT SURPRISED THAT YOU'D WANT TO RUN AWAY NOW
COOL IT, NIMIYA
IF THAT MONSTER REALLY IS A DOLL, THEN THE DOLL MASTER WHO CONTROLS IT SHOULD BE ME...
JUST WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE UNKNOWN?
PANG
SOMETIMES YOU LOOK AT ME LIKE YOU'RE AFRAID.
DID YOU THINK I WOULDN'T NOTICE?

SMACK
—QUIT YOUR HYSTERICS, IDIOT
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING! EVEN IF THIEL WAS A DOLL...
HE MUST HAVE DONE THAT BECAUSE HE DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE!
AND THE DOLL MAKER, TOO..
ANYWAY, NO MATTER WHO HE IS, I HAVE TO MEET HIM NO MATTER WHAT!
DAMN...

YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING WITHOUT ME
MY HEAD HURTS...
SO WHAT ARE YOU SAYING WE SHOULD DO? ENLIGHTEN ME.
!
P.W
I'D RATHER GO IN BLIND THAN HAVE EYES THAT ARE WORSE THAN USELESS!
I CAN MANAGE ON MY OWN!
WAIT, NIMIYA

MVC
DAMN!
DON'T
NO...!

GIRL WHO
HOW CAN YOU SEE US?
I'LL LIKELY HAVE SEEN HER SOMEWHERE
BUT WE SHOULD TAKE SOME STEPS JUST IN CASE.
FORGET IT!

WHAM
.....

I FEEL LIKE I'VE SEEN HER BEFORE SOMEWHERE...
I CAN'T DIE HERE!
I DON'T WANT TO DIE!
NIMIYA!
"NIMIYA..."
...GOT TO...
I'VE GOT TO GO BACK...

...SIRA...
...Sira...
I'LL ALWAYS PROTECT YOU...
I'VE GOT THE POWER TO DEFEAT THE SHIKIGAMI!
I HAVE NO REASON TO BE AFRAID OF ANYTHING!
BUT YOU DIED. DIDN'T YOU?!
I'M ALL RIGHT NOW...
THE EVIL AURA HAS WEAKENED

I'VE GOT TO MEET HIM AGAIN... AND I WANT TO ASK HIM SOMETHING.
"PLEASE TELL ME DOLL MAKER..."
"WHERE WAS I LOCKED AWAY AND WHY?"
"THIS PERSON I AM WITH THESE POWERS"
"WHO AM I?"
FIND THE DOLL MAKER...
GO TO SHINJUKU
!
MY LEGS BROUGHT ME HERE ON THEIR OWN...

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU...
...!
THIEL!?!
NIMIYA.
OHH...?

HMPH...
...
MY LOVELY LITTLE DOLLS HAVE ALSO TOLD ME QUITE A BIT ABOUT YOU.
SHUT
WHO WOULD HAVE GUESSED, HAIRAN
TO THINK YOU'D BECOME THE HEAD OF THE MULTI-NATIONAL ORGANIZATION
IT WAS ALL TO FIND THE HERETICAL BOX AND THE SPIRIT INSIDE.
DID THE GUARDIANS CONSENT TO YOUR DOING SO?
IT SEEMS LIKE WE HAVE YOU TO THANK FOR THE SHIKIGAMI CROWDING THE STREETS

THEY KEEP THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE YIN AND THE YANG. THOSE ARE THE SIX SPIRITS.
IN OTHER WORDS THREE YIN AND THREE YANG.
THERE ARE SIX LOCATIONS FOR THE SIX GUARDIAN TEMPLES.
WHY?
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHY WE WERE TRYING TO LOCATE THE DOLL MAKER?
BUT ONE OF THE YIN HERETICAL BOXES WAS DESTROYED.
ONE SUCH SPIRIT HAS BEEN RELEASED FROM THE BOX— AND THE ENTIRE WORLD OF YIN IS BECOMING TAINTED.
AND THUS DIED CLINGING TO TERRIBLE ANGER AND HATRED AND REGRETS.
THE SPIRITS ARE MASSES OF ENERGY. THE POWERFUL SOULS OF THOSE WHO WERE INFLICTED WITH TERRIBLE AGONY IN THEIR LIVES.

IF WE IGNORE IT IT WILL ONLY BE A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE YANG REGION THAT REFLECTS IT WILL BECOME AFFECTED AS WELL
THAT'S WHY THE GUARDIANS DECIDED TO STEP IN.
THE ONE WHO DESTROYED THE HERETICAL BOX AND RELEASED THE SPIRITS HAS ALREADY BEEN CAPTURED
THE SUCCESSIVE GENERATIONS OF SPIRITS WERE CREATED BY THE CLAN OF DOLL MASTERS.
FORTUNATELY, THE MAN WHO WAS CAPTURED WAS A DOLL MASTER, SO HE MADE A NEW SPIRIT AT ONCE,
AND THE REST OF THE BOXES THAT HAD BEEN SCATTERED DUE TO THE SHIFTING BALANCE WERE LOCATED AND RETURNED TO THEIR PROPER LOCATIONS, SO THERE WERE NOT ANY PROBLEMS HOWEVER.
THE ONE AND ONLY THING THAT CAN CREATE A DOLL TO SEAL THE SPIRITS IN THE HERETICAL BOXES...
THE DOLL MAKER...
VANISHED MANY YEARS AGO...

I SEE WELL THAT SOUNDS COMPLI-CATED
WE'VE LEARNED THAT THE DOLL MAKER IS APPARENTLY IN THE YANG REGION AND IS IN THIS PARTICU-LAR AREA.
SO I WAS SENT HERE AS AN ENVOY TO MEET THE DOLL MAKER.
...WELL....
...
BUT...
TO CAPTURE... I MEAN MEET THE DOLL MAKER, WHO HAS STUBBORNLY BEEN ON THE RUN ALL THIS TIME.
WE THOUGHT THAT RETURNING THE THREE SPIRITS OF THE YANG REGION TO THEIR PROPER POSITIONS, REC-REATING THE BARRIER,
AND SEALING AWAY THE ENTIRE SHINJUKU AREA WOULD BE THE QUICKEST WAY TO LOCATE THE DOLL MAKER.
WHY ARE YOU LOOKING FOR THE HERETICAL BOXES IN THE YANG REGION?

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY. SLOW AND STEADY WINS THE RACE
NO MATTER HOW IT'S DONE THE SCATTERED BOXES MUST BE FOUND.
WELL, LET'S LEAVE IT AT THAT FOR NOW
OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME, A SPIRIT WILL LOSE ITS ORIGINAL CHARACTERISTICS AND THUS THEY BECOME MERE MASSES OF POWER THAT CAN NO LONGER CONTROL HOW THAT POWER IS USED .
IT IS ENERGY THAT CANNOT FOCUS ITS POWER ON A TARGET, AND IF SUCH ENERGY IS RELEASED, THE ENTIRE WORLD WILL BE AFFECTED THAT MUCH IS ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN
RIGHT, FU XIAO?
WHY DID THE GUARDIANS CREATE SOMETHING SO TERRIFYING?
WHY ARE THEY CAUSING SO MUCH TROUBLE WHEN THEY HAVE SUCH POWER IN THEIR GRASP?

NIMIYA... WHAT'S WRONG?
YOU LOOK REALLY SCARY!
DID YOU... KILL LIAM?
LIAM WAS ABUSING YOU...
THAT'S WHY YOU KILLED HIM... RIGHT?
HOW'D YOU KNOW?
...YOU'RE REALLY KIND, NIMIYA.

...YOU'RE TELLING ME THAT THIS IS A MONSTER?
...ARE YOU AFRAID OF ME?
HE'S NOTHING MORE THAN A FRIGHTENED CHILD...
NO, I'M NOT.
COME WITH ME!
HUH? WHOA ...
THIEU...?

click
YOU PICKED THE LOCK AND BROKE IN AGAIN? I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU...
I'VE GOT A BONE TO PICK WITH YOU. I WAS WAITING FOR YOU
...!
YOU PLAY PRETTY ROUGH, DON'T YOU?
I GO TO ONE OF LIAM'S MEN'S PLACES, AND THEN ALL OF THE SUDDEN THERE'S A RAID?!
I BARELY MADE IT OUT IN ONE PIECE!
DON'T SNAP AT ME LIKE THAT. I ONLY PROVIDE INFORMATION.
I DON'T HAVE THE POWER TO ISSUE ORDERS TO THEM

...IS YOUR HEADACHE THAT BAD?
LIAM WAS KILLED.
PROBABLY BY A DOLL
OH...? SO YOU'VE ACTUALLY GOT SOMETHING CONCRETE TO GO ON NOW
AND THEN?
HE'S A MONSTER
I'LL DO WHAT I WANT, TOO!
...
DO YOU WANT SOME PAINKILLERS OR SOMETHING?
BUT NIMIYA, THAT IDIOT, WON'T LISTEN TO ME, AND WENT DASHING OFF AGAIN...
WELL, IT'S JUST AS WELL THAT SHE GETS TAUGHT A LESSON FOR ONCE!
I'M SICK OF HAVING TO WATCH OUT FOR HER

I'VE TAKEN SOME, BUT THEY AREN'T HELPING ANY!
WELL, IF YOUR HEAD'S SO MUCH TROUBLE, JUST GET RID OF IT!
SHE'S BEEN THE ONE TAKING IT OUT ON ME!
SHE KEEPS SHOUTING AT ME ALL ARROGANT. LIKE SHE'D LIKE TO PUNCH ME AND EVEN THOUGH IT'S OBVIOUS THAT SHE'S HELPLESS AND IN WAY OVER HER HEAD SHE RUSHES HEADLONG IN ANYWAY!
AND THEN WHAT DO YOU THINK SHE FINISHED OFF WITH? SHE SAID IT WASN'T A SURPRISE I'D WANT TO RUN AWAY! DAMN. HOW CAN I POSSIBLY KEEP MY COOL AT THAT?
...JUST WHAT KIND OF A DOCTOR ARE YOU...?!
I KNOW A LOT'S BEEN HAPPENING AND YOU'RE UNDER A LOT OF PRESSURE
BUT DON'T TAKE IT ALL OUT ON NIMIYA.
HEY, YOU KNOW

NORMALLY YOU'D GO STICKING YOUR NECK OUT FOR ANYTHING, EVEN WHEN IT'S NOT YOUR PROBLEM...
AND THERE'S NO REASON TO NOT JUST IGNORE IT.
SO WHY ARE YOU BEING SO HARSH ON NIMIYA?
...
SINCE WHEN HAVE I.
...WELL, IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER.
I JUST HOPE YOU WON'T REGRET IT LATER.
OKAY, SERIOUSLY, WHAT ARE YOU DRIVING AT?
I'M SAYING YOU'RE AN IDIOT. YOUR HEAD IS SUCH A PIECE OF JUNK IT'S ALMOST REFRESHING. IS THAT CLEAR ENOUGH?
YOU'D GO THAT FAR...?
THINK ABOUT IT. SHE PROBABLY COULDN'T TELL UP FROM DOWN WHEN HER ONLY FAMILY WAS KILLED.
A FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL LEFT ALL ON HER OWN
IF I WERE STUCK IN YOUR SITUATION... I'D SHOW NIMIYA MORE SYMPATHY!

...YOU ALWAYS DO THINGS BY HALVES SO YOU GET WRAPPED UP IN A LOT OF UNNECESSARY COMPLICATIONS
WELL YOU'RE IN DEEP ENOUGH THAT YOU CAN'T GET OUT
GET A GRIP ALREADY AND DEAL WITH IT!
I WOULDN'T HAVE COME IF I'D KNOWN YOU WERE PREACH AT ME
SCREW THIS, I'M LEAV-ING.
YOU'D BETTER EXPL..IN TO ME WHAT'S GOING DOWN ON YOUR END TOMORROW!
YOU TOO.
HMPH
YOU, TALKING ABOUT SYMPATHY? THE SUN MUST HAVE RISEN FROM THE WEST!
IF YOU'VE GOT THE TIME TO CRITICIZE ME, THEN WHY DON'T YOU GO FIND OUT WHERE NIMIYA IS?
RANT ALL YOU WANT, BUT IT'S OBVIOUS THAT YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT HER!

SLAM
HELLO? ...YES. THIS IS HE.
...MR. LOH?
WHERE'RE WE GOING?
YOU TWO ARE JUST AS CUTE FROM THE FRONT AS YOU ARE FROM THE BACK!
...!
HEY THERE!

HEY COME HANG WITH US FOR A WHILE
WE'LL SHOW YOU A GREAT PLACE!
YOU'RE REALLY YOUNG GIRL! HOW OLD ARE YOU?
SHUT UP AND GET OUT OF H
THEY'RE THE SAME AS MIZUKI'S FRIENDS...
HUH?
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
THEY HAVE THE SAME EYES AS THE PEOPLE TAKING THOSE CAPSULES!
...
SHOVE
SO HIT ON SOMEONE ELSE!
OUCH!

YOU REALLY SHOULD HAVE LISTENED WHILE WE WERE PLAYING NICE
DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE BEING A BIT TOO SELF-CONSCIOUS?
WE JUST WANTED TO HAVE A BIT OF FUN
...YEAH RIGHT!
COME ON, NOW, COME HERE
WHAM
SLAP
WHA...?!
!?

WHOOSH!
.. YOU BITCH ..
YOU'D BETTER BEHAVE, OR YOU CAN KISS THIS BRAT GOODBYE!
UGH!
...THIEU...
THUD

wham
NIMIYA...
...NGH...!
YOU BITCH! YOU PISS ME OFF! I'LL SHOW YOU WHO'S BOSS!

THAT WAS THE MOMENT WHEN IT STARTED.
FROM THE INSTANT I SAW THAT INCOMPLETE STAR OF DAVID...
WHY IS HE ON MY MIND THIS MUCH?
ALMOST LIKE AN OBSESSION WHOSE TRUE IDENTITY IS UNKNOWN...
IS IT RESTLESSNESS I FEEL AT SEEING THAT VISION?
WHY?
HIM.

.....
IT'S JUST... A HALLUCI-NATION, RIGHT?
HEH HEH HEH ...

!!
YOU COULD HAVE DIED BLISSFULLY IGNORANT AT THE END OF THE WORLD IF ONLY YOU DIDN'T KNOW
YOU CAN SEE ME CAN'T YOU? POOR THING
SHIKI-GAMI?!
...!
GET AWAY FROM ME, YOU FREAK!
BANG
BANG
HAHAHA HA...
WHAT CAN YOU DO?
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

THUD
THUD
THUD
THUD
AND WHAT IF I TELL YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO?!
ARE YOU GOING TO TRY TO TAKE US ON WITH THAT GIRL?
WHAT DO YOU WANT?!
HAH! KEEP DREAMING!
SHIT...!
YOUR HIGHNESS!

I NEVER EXPECTED THE OLD MAN WHO BETRAYED THE GUARDIANS TO SHOW UP
LOOKS LIKE QUITE THE CAST HAS BEEN ASSEMBLED
HMPH
SOON YOU WILL FACE DESTRUCTION, AND THE REAL SHOW WILL BEGIN!
...ISN'T THAT THE OLD MAN...
Hap
Hap
I THOUGHT I ALREADY WARNED YOU.
WAIT...!!

fwish
WHY'S EVERYONE JUST APPEARING IN FRONT OF ME AND SAYING PORTENTOUS CRAP I DON'T GET!?
SHUT UP!!
THROB
...NG!
IS THAT THE SIGN OF IMBALANCE YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT...?
THAT HALF-FINISHED STAR OF DAVID
JUST WHO ARE YOU?
PROTECT THE DOLL MASTER!
GO.

DON'T
.....
flutter
flutter
HEH! LOOKS LIKE WE WAS RIGHT ALL!
I'VE COME TOO FAR TO BACK OUT NOW!
DO NOT GO THERE

OOF
..
THUD
MAYBE I'LL PLAY WITH THIS GIRL!
...YOU BASTARDS ARE ON THAT DRUG, AREN'T YOU...
WHAT'S IT TO YOU?
HUH?
WHY DON'T WE HAVE YOU HAND OVER ALL YOUR VALUABLES FIRST!

...IT'S THERE
HUFF
THERE'S A SHIKIGAMI RESIDING IN EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM
HUFF
...
IF I DON'T KILL THEM ALL, I'LL BE KILLED!
I'LL BE KILLED!
bulge
WHAT'S WRONG? YOU WERE SO FEISTY BEFORE...

NIMIYA...
thud
Vrum
THEY'RE ALL SHIKIGAMI!
RUMBLE
...WHAT'S GOING ON?!
RUMBLE

AH...!
crack
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT...?
I'M NOT GONNA DIE HERE!!
Boom

thwack
!!
DAMN... THIS IS ONE PESKY SHIKIGAMI! YOU'RE ASKING FOR IT!
VRRR...
bang
bang
bang

DON'T GET IN THE WAY!
rumble rumble rumble
BOOM
boom
SHIT...!
thud
!!
thud
thud
FWOOSH
NIMIYA'S IN THERE

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S IN MY WAY!
GRAB
WHISH
!?
... SLIDE
WH
AM

HAAH...
H...AH...
THERE ARE NO SHIKIGAMI...!!?

!?
FWIP
CLUTCH
WHAT...
WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHAT DID YOU DO...?!
...!!
WHAT... WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU?!

SNAP
SNAP
SNAP
AAAAHHH!
LET LET ME GO!
UGH...
.....
WHO WOULD HAVE GUESSED ...
THAT YOU'RE ACTUALLY A DOLL MASTER!

SHOCK
YOU'RE LOOKING AT ME LIKE I'M A MONSTER!
BUT YOU DID THE EXACT SAME THING AS ME DIDN'T YOU?
ARE YOU RUNNING AWAY?

YOU JUST KILLED A FEW HUMANS, RIGHT?

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.
THOSE PATHETIC FOOLS JUST GOT WHAT THEY DESERVED.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. I UNDER-STAND.
...I WAS ONLY...
EVEN IF YOU HADN'T KILLED THEM HERE,
AT SOME POINT, THEY WOULD HAVE DIED PATHETIC, MISERABLE DEATHS SOME-WHERE.
..THIS IS..

A "DOLL."
YOU CAN'T GO BACK NOW. ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.
click
COME WITH ME!
YOU PROMISED
THIS IS...
TO BE WITH ME FOREVER!
IF I GO WITH THIEU RIGHT NOW, LIKE THIS...
WILL I BE ABLE TO SEE THE DOLL MAKER?

BE SAFE, NIMIYA!
NIMIYA...

COME...
THUD
THUD
THUD
THUD
!!

"...DON'T..."
"DON'T GO!"
"DON'T GO THERE!"

"YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO COME BACK."

!!
BANG
BANG
BANG

THIEU!
HURRY AND USE YOUR POWERS!
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? DO IT!!
I CAN'T
I KILLED PEOPLE WITH MY POWERS...
!

DO IT!
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.
I SWEAR I'LL PROTECT YOU!
twitch

!?
!
...NO!

BOOM
NIMIYA.

WHO IS THAT MAN?
THIEL! ...?!
I'M NOT LETTING YOU HAVE NIMIYA.
FWIP

I'LL KILL YOU AND TAKE NIMIYA, I SWEAR!

... HMPH. NO MATTER. THERE'S NO NEED TO PANIC
A DOLL .?
DOLL
BRING ME TO YOUR DOLL MAKER!
I WILL GET NIMIYA BACK

OH
ELECTRICIAN...?

I WON'T LET YOU GO AWAY AGAIN!
ELECTRI-CUM... THERE'S...
THERE'S SOMETHING I HAVEN'T TOLD YOU.
squeeze
YEAH?

...WHAT DID YOU SAY?
GUARDIANS SHOULD HAVE KNOWN WHERE THE SIX SPIRITS ARE
AND YET DESPITE THAT, THEY HAVEN'T TAKEN ANY ACTION. I DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT AT ALL
THE "YIN" SHOULD BE CONSTANTLY LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO OVERTHROW THE "YANG."
I KNOW THE DOLL MAKER...

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
RIGHT, FU XIAO...? THERE ARE ONLY TWO MORE LOCATIONS FOR THE YANG SPIRITS...
I'M WILLING TO HELP THE GUARDIANS FULFILL THEIR WISH
...I WONDER WHAT THE GUARDIANS WILL THINK...
YOU'RE REALLY A DANGEROUS CREATURE AREN'T YOU.
IF YOU NEED THE DOLL [illegible] ER, I'D ADVISE LISTENING TO WHAT I [illegible]
NOT LIKE YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO LOSE..
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE PLANNING FU XIAO
.....
YOU'RE THE PRECIOUS PRINCESS OF THE GUARDIANS. HOW COULD I POSSIBLY DARE DEFY YOUR WISHES?

THEY THRIVE IN THE SHADOWS OF SOCIETY
AND AT TIMES THEY HAVE THE POWER TO MOVE ALL OF SOCIETY
BUT I DO WONDER, YOUR HIGHNESS JUST WHAT
DO YOU HAVE IN MIND?
DON'T YOU THINK THAT THE UNDERGROUND MAKES A GOOD FRONTLINE FOR THE YIN?
IF WE CAN CONTROL THEM, THEN THEY WILL BE OF GREAT HELP IN INVADING THE YANG
BUT THERE'S SOMETHING THAT WE CANNOT EVEN IMAGINE EXCLUDING
WHAT IS THAT?
HAVE YOU HEARD....
OF THE MAN NAMED WEI LEI YUAN?

KUGUTSU

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ACT.9

WHAT A TERRIBLE WOUND THAT WAS!
BUT IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW. IT'S ALREADY HEALED RIGHT UP.
THESE WOUNDS WERE FOR YOUR SAKE, HAIRAN. SO IT'S OKAY.
I DON'T CARE WHAT HAPPENS AS LONG AS YOU'RE HAPPY
IT MAKES ME HAPPY TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT...
YOU'RE SUCH A GOOD BOY.
HIS HIGH-NESS ...?
WELL, WELL. JUST LOOK WHAT WE HAVE HERE.

BAM
OH MY, FU XIAO
IT'S JUST A SHIKI-GAMI
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
I SEE YOU'VE DRAGGED IN ANOTHER STRANGE ONE.
A SHIKI-GAMI? ...BUT I CAN SEE IT...
.....
JUST LIKE YOU.
THAT'S 'CAUSE IT'S TAKEN THE APPEARANCE OF A HUMAN.
BUT TAKE A PEEK THROUGH THIS, AND IT'S A COMPLETE MONSTER.

I WAS WORKING FOR YOU, PRINCESS
WHAT A DISGUSTING DOLL
DIDN'T YOU WANT TO KNOW
ABOUT THAT UNLICENSED DOCTOR WE WERE DISCUSSING?
BY THE WAY, FU XIAO IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE LAST SEEN YOU
OH MY
HEY, KITAMURA!
IT'S BEEN A WHILE!

THERE WAS A HUGE FUSS ABOUT IT BUT IT WENT THROUGH IN THE END RIGHT?
COME NOW DON'T TALK LIKE THAT! YOU'RE STARTING TO SOUND LIKE AN OLD RETIREE WITH TOO MUCH TIME ON HIS HANDS
HAVE A SEAT!
HOW'S WORK BEEN LATELY?
AND WHAT ABOUT YOU? YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE PRETTY HARD UP AS USUAL
DON'T PLAY DUMB NOW.
ABOUT THE REDEVELOPMENT IN SHINJUKU!...
HEY, HEY.
WELL, I KNOW A LOT OF PEOPLE!
I'M ALWAYS KEEPING MY LITTLE ANTENNA UP IN CASE THERE'S SOME INTERESTING NEWS GOING AROUND.
IS IT TRUE THAT THE FOREIGN MAFIA ARE INVOLVED IN THE BUSINESS THAT WAS [illegible]D OUT?
CUT IT OUT, YOU ROGUE I REALLY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING...
HONESTLY, YOU MUST HAVE NOTHING BETTER TO DO!
WHERE'D YOU HEAR THAT FROM?

THE TAIWANESE UNDERGROUND IS ABOUT TO BLOW A GASKET!
BUT YOU KNOW, I CAN'T BELIEVE THE UNDERGROUND'S STAYIN' QUIET AFTER WHAT THOSE FOREIGNERS DID
HMPH... I SUPPOSE YOU CAN'T EXPECT SOMEONE WHO EARNS HIS BREAD BY SELLING THE CHIT-CHAT HE HEARS IS GOING TO GIVE IT UP FOR NOTHING
PLEASE I DEAL WITH INFORMATION.
BESIDES I HARDLY MAKE ANY MONEY ON ANYTHING BUT THE INFO I GET ON THE SLY!
THEY SEE THINGS A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY THAN US.
THERE WAS THAT ACCIDENT IN SOME TAIWANESE ASSOCIATION BUILDING, RIGHT?
IT'S LIKE THEY COMPLETELY SETTLED DOWN AFTER THAT
I MEAN... WHAT HAPPENED TEN YEARS AGO, YOU KNOW?
BUT IT NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE
FWOO
YEAH, THERE WAS SOMETHING LIKE THAT ONCE

.....
I HAVE A PRETTY GOOD IDEA OF WHERE TO FIND HIM
THE ONE WITH A SCAR ON HIS RIGHT SHOULDER?
THE ONE YOU SAID YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR.
...I WAS HOPING FOR MORE OF A REACTION.
WHAT GUY?
OH BY THE WAY, KITAMURA, DID YOU FIND THE GUY?
.....

WHAT'RE YOU LOOKING SO SHOCKED ABOUT?
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE SEEN A GHOST
SO YOU WERE THE ONE FEEDING THE ELECTRICIAN INTELLIGENCE?
HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THEM?
DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?
...YOU'VE GOT SOME NERVE BEING SO PERSISTENT.
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
YOU'RE CHASING AFTER "THEM," AREN'T YOU?

IT'S NOT LIKE YOU CAN DO ANYTHING AT THIS POINT, ANYWAY
SO WHY DON'T YOU JUST SHUT UP AND WATCH?
HERE YOU'RE KNOWN AS "WEI LEI YUJIN", AREN'T YOU?
GET LOST!
POOR GUY...

HEY DOC! GOING SOME-WHERE?
!
IN YOUR DREAMS!
...AND HERE I WAS THINKING I'D NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN
GIVE THOSE BACK
TO A CERTAIN MR. LOH'S PLACE, RIGHT?
MEETING UP WITH A PRETTY LADY BEYOND HER HUSBAND'S WATCHFUL GAZE HOW DOES THAT SOUND?
I WAS WAITING FOR YOU AT THE HOSPITAL ALL MORNING! AND YOUR PHONE ISN'T ON!
JUST WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN?
CUT IT OUT!
HURRY UP AND GET IN.
click
OH FORGET IT.
LET'S GO
WHERE?

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
I NEED YOUR HELP.
SOUNDS DANGEROUS HOW UNUSUAL FOR YOU.
WHAT HAP-PENED?
I NEED SOME REINFORCE-MENTS.
IT SEEMS LIKE NIMIYA HAS MET THE DOLL MAKER BEFORE.
THE DOLL MAKER?
WELL, IT WAS WHEN SHE WAS REALLY YOUNG, SO HER MEMORIES ARE A LITTLE HAZY
OH? THAT'S UNEXPECTED
ANYWAY, NIMIYA THINKS THAT THE MESSAGE SHE GOT FROM THE BIRDS WAS A CRY FOR HELP FROM THE DOLL MAKER.
WHAT-EVER, I COULDN'T CARE LESS
I JUST DON'T WANT NIMIYA TO MEET THE DOLL MAKER

THAT'S WHY I'M GOING TO GO
WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET ANY FURTHER.
BUT IF WE DON'T FIND THE DOLL MAKER,
"FIND THE DOLL MAKER AND TAKE THE DOLL." BUT THE DOLL THAT NIMIYA IS SUPPOSED TO TAKE IS AN ATROCITY!
A DOLL MAKER WHO MAKES A TWISTED MONSTER LIKE THAT IS UP TO NO GOOD.
I'M GONNA FIND OUT WHAT HE'S UP TO!
screech
WHAT'S WITH YOU?
YEAH, I AM...
YOU'RE ACTING STRANGE...

I'VE GOT THIS MEMORY SOMEWHERE IN MY HEAD OF THIS GUY I DON'T KNOW.
I HAVE FLASHBACKS SOMETIMES... THOUGH THEY'RE NOT CAUSED BY ANY ONE THING.
...AND?
IN THESE FLASH-BACKS I'M THE GUY WITH THE MEMORY.
AND THE GUY WHO SHOWS UP LOOKS JUST LIKE NIMIYA.
HE WENT SOME-WHERE-- I DON'T KNOW WHERE, BUT NOT HERE...
HE WENT TO DESTROY "THE SIX-POINTED STARS" AND NEVER CAME BACK.
I SAW THAT AT LIAM'S PLACE WHEN I WAS THERE THE OTHER DAY.
BUT THE ONE THERE...
WAS MISSING A CORNER.
AND I RAN INTO THIS BUM OUTSIDE THE THE-ATRE
HE TOLD ME HE WAS "TRYING TO GET THE SITUATION UNDER CON-TROL BEFORE THE BALANCE WAS DESTROYED" OR SOME-

THE SHIKIGAMI SEEMS TO KNOW THAT GUY, TOO
THEY CALLED HIM "YOUR HIGHNESS."
.....
HMM
SO YOUR FLASHBACKS AND THE PRESENT SITUATION ARE CONNECTED...
SEEMS LIKE YOU ACTUALLY DIDN'T LOSE YOUR MIND LIKE WE THOUGHT.
SO IS THE MAN IN YOUR FLASHBACK A DOLL MASTER LIKE NIMIYA?
I THINK SO
HE HAD THE SAME KIND OF POWER.
GIVE ME A CIGARETTE
THAT'S WHY I DON'T WANT NIMIYA TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THEM.
I SEE
THAT'S WHY YOU NEED REINFORCEMENTS TO CRASH THE INTERNATIONALS.
HUH?

I FEEL BAD FOR LOH, BUT THE TIMING S TOO GOOD.
IT SHOULDN'T BE THAT HARD TO GET SOME BACKUP FROM HONG KONG.
WELL YOU DO NEED IT IF YOU'RE GONNA BE FACING OFF AGAINST THAT MANY PEOPLE
IT'S NICE EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE
THAT'S UNUSUAL YOU START SMOKING LATELY?
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
YOU'LL SEE WHEN WE GET THERE.
YOU COULD SAY THAT
...I THOUGHT IT'D TAKE MORE THAN THAT TO TALK YOU INTO IT
WHY?
IT'S NOTHING..

ANYWAY... I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'D DO WITHOUT YOU
I DON'T KNOW, THERE'S JUST A LOT OF STUFF
OH?
I SHOULD BE DEALING WITH THIS A BIT MORE CALMLY.
BUT I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN AWFUL TO NIMIYA.
THERE'S NO REAL POINT IN IT NOW
HER GRANDFATHER JUST DIED, AND OUT OF THE BLUE SHE'S GOT SOME WEIRD POWER...
THERE'S A PART OF HER THAT'S SCARED OF HERSELF... WELL YEAH, OF COURSE THERE IS
ARE YOU NUTS?

WHAT?! HERE I AM, BEING SERIOUS FOR ONCE, AND...
THERE'S NO ONE WHO'S AS GOOD AS YOU AT POKING HIS NOSE INTO STUFF. HE REALLY SHOULD JUST STAY OUT OF...
That's why it's so entertaining!
BUT THIS IS JUST TO HAVE A GOOD TIME...
IF ANYTHING GOES SERIOUSLY WRONG, I'LL BE THE FIRST TO RUN, SO DO YOUR BEST ON YOUR OWN FROM THEN ON OUT!
DO YOU THINK I'D HELP YOU IF THERE WAS NOTHING IN IT FOR ME?
OF COURSE I'M DOING IT FOR KICKS!
WHAT?

GAAAH !!
YOU COWARD! AREN'T YOU ALWAYS LECTURING BECAUSE YOU'RE WORRIED?!
IT'S FUN TO LECTURE PEOPLE AND LOOK ALL SELF-SATISFIED
Watch the road when you're driving.
YOU'RE AWFUL!
THIS IS THE MAN THAT THE UNDERWORLD RECOGNIZES AS "VICIOUS?"
HE'S MUCH YOUNGER THAN I'D EXPECTED
INDEED... HE'S ONLY 28.

THERE WAS A HUGE POLICE RAID A FEW YEARS AGO, AND A LOT OF THE BIG BOSSES OF UNDERGROUND ORGANIZATIONS WERE NABBED
BUSINESS WAS CHEAP, BUT THE SOURCE OF MONEY WAS PRACTICALLY CRUSHED—
THE ORGANI-SATIONS HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO DOWNSIZE AND DISPERSE OUTSIDE OF THE CITY—
THE ONE BEHIND IT WAS WEI
—BUT HE'S NOT A POLICE AGENT, RIGHT?
SOMEONE WHO JUST HATED THE UNDERGROUND WOULDN'T DO SOMETHING THAT VIOLENT
RIGHT AFTER THAT, THERE WAS A MASS ARREST AND DEPORTATION OF ILLEGAL IMMI-GRANTS
A MAN WHO WAS CONNECTED TO WEI HAD GOTTEN IN CONTACT WITH A WOMAN CALGHT UP IN THE DEPORTA-TIONS SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE THE RAID ON THE UNDERGROUND
PERHAPS THERE WAS SOME REASON FOR THAT, BUT—

MAYBE THEY DON'T WANT TO START A FIGHT WITH THE TAIWANESE?
I'VE HEARD THAT HE'S GOT THE SUPPORT OF THE TAIWANESE UNDERGROUND
BUT THERE'S ONLY ONE OF HIM. WHY'S THE UNDERGROUND SO TERRIFIED OF ONE MAN...?
WELL, THERE'S A LOT OF OTHER STUFF IF YOU GET INTO THE DETAILS. BUT IN SHORT,
WEI IS THE KIND OF PERSON WHO WILL DO ANYTHING AND WILL STOP AT NOTHING TO GET WHAT HE WANTS
ANYWAY, HE'S TROUBLE
RATHER THAN TRYING TO WIN HIM OVER, I THINK WE SHOULD JUST HURRY UP AND DO AWAY WITH HIM.
I HEAR HE'S ON GOOD TERMS WITH THE HONG KONG TRIADS
HONG KONG AND TAIWAN ARE BOTH FRUSTRATING REFUSING TO BE ABSORBED BY SOMEONE ELSE
HE CAME TO SHINJUKU SOME FIVE OR SIX YEARS AGO
NO ONE KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT HIM FROM BEFORE THEN
"WEI LEI YUAN" PROBABLY ISN'T EVEN HIS REAL NAME

LIU MANG'S GROUP IS UNAFFILIATED AS WELL, WHICH MEANS THAT THERE'S A POSSIBILITY THEY MIGHT COME AROUND TO US.
IF WE CAN ONLY GET WEI ON OUR SIDE THEN WE'LL GET BOTH OF THEM AT ONCE!
THIS MAN MIGHT BE WILLING TO WORK WITH US, DEPENDING ON WHAT CONDITIONS THERE MIGHT BE
THEN SHALL I GO NEGOTIATE?
IS THAT SO?
YOU DON'T NEED TO ACT SO SURPRISED
YOU?
I'LL DO MY BEST TO PRODUCE THE RESULTS THAT YOU DESIRE PRINCESS
THE SHIKIGAMI IS A NICE LITTLE TOOL FOR BARGAINING, ISN'T IT?
—ARE YOU PLANNING ON BRINGING THE SHIKIGAMI WITH YOU?

WELL, THEN, I'M GOING TO GO DO MY BEST.
ALL RIGHT TAKE CARE OF THAT FOR ME
SO YOU MEAN THREATS, NOT NEGOTIATION...
THERE ISN'T THAT BIG OF A DIFFERENCE...
THE CHOICE IS STILL HIS.
BANG
IT'S NOT SOMETHING I NEED TO BRING YOU WITH ME FOR
IRA, PLEASE GO COLLECT DATA ON HIS HIGHNESS
SOME OTHER SHIKIGAMI WOULD STILL BE MORE THAN ENOUGH
WHAT ABOUT WEI?

Are you trying to give me a challenge?
CRAP...
IS THIS REALLY THE BASEMENT OF A CONDO?
THIS IS BIGGER THAN MOST ARCADES...
EXCUSE ME BUT COULD YOU TELL ME HOW TO GET TO THE EASTERN BUILDING?
OH, DEAR MISSY,
DID YOU JUST MOVE HERE?
PEOPLE GET LOST DOWN HERE ALL THE TIME. IT'S LIKE A MAZE
IF YOU WANT THE EASTERN SIDE TAKE THE STAIRS ON THE LEFT. GO DOWN TO THE SECOND FLOOR AND THEN COME BACK UP. THAT'S THE FASTEST WAY
THANKS
AFTER GOING DOWN CUT ACROSS THE SQUARE AND TURN RIGHT ON THE THIRD CORNER!
IS THIS SUPPOSED TO BE THE FASTEST WAY?

I HEARD THE ELECTRICIAN HAS A SHOP HERE...
I BET IT'S FULL OF JUNK
HEY, NIMIYA...
I THINK YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG IMPRESSION SO I'LL TELL YOU FLAT OUT
YEAH?
I MIGHT STARE AT YOU KIND OF STRANGELY SOMETIMES...
BUT IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU
IT'S JUST THAT YOU LOOK EXACTLY LIKE SOMEONE I KNOW THAT'S ALL...

A STRANGE GUY, ACTUALLY.
NAME'S HIFUMI
...
OH, BUT! I'M NOT SAYING THAT YOU LOOK LIKE A GUY OR ANYTHING!
SO IT IS A GUY
BUT ANYWAY
A GUY?
I MEAN, I'M YOUR FRIEND, KIND OF...
DON'T GO BOTTLING UP EVERYTHING ON YOUR OWN
...
...AH, HIS EYES...RE REALLY PALE...

...
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
DAMN IT, I'M LOST AGAIN...
IS THERE SOMEONE THERE...?
OH, GOOD
SORRY...
WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH THIS PLACE...?
FLICKER
...HUH?

!?
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?
...WHAT... IS THIS ROOM...?
AN ALTAR...?

bang
shudder
!!
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT ROOM? TALK ABOUT CREEPY...
.....
WELL, WELL...
OH?
AREN'T YOU NIMIYA?

Hmm?
I'M TRYING TO GET BACK TO THE ELECTRICIAN'S PLACE YOU KNOW HOW TO GET THERE?
I'M KITAMURA MOMOJI, A FRIEND OF THE ELECTRICIAN'S...
YOU'RE THE GIRL WHO SHOWED UP AT THE ELECTRICIAN'S PLACE RIGHT?
OH NO NEED TO BE SO SUSPICIOUS!
WHO'RE YOU?
I WAS TRYING TO GET TO HOSPITAL...
ACTUALLY, I'M A BIT LOST, MYSELF...
I SUPPOSE...
ISN'T THE ELECTRICIAN UP AT HOME?
SINCE WE'RE BOTH LOST, WE CAN FIND OUR WAY BACK TOGETHER
I DON'T LIKE THIS. HASN'T IT BEEN REALLY HECTIC LATELY?
THOSE INVISIBLE THINGS AND SUCH
MAYBE THE ELECTRICIAN'S RUNNING AROUND DOING SOMETHING ABOUT THOSE CAPSULES AGAIN DON'T YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT?
I THINK THAT'S ALREADY BEEN TAKEN CARE OF...
HE'S NOT THAT'S WHY I CAME DOWN HERE TO LOOK FOR HIM. ACTUALLY, I CAME TO LOOK FOR WE!...
HE'S NOT AT THE HOSPITAL SO I THOUGHT THE ELECTRICIAN WOULD KNOW WHERE HE IS...

SO YOU SEE... I WANTED TO ASK THE ELECTRICIAN WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON SINCE THEN...
YES, I HAVE THOUGH IT WAS SOME TEN YEARS AGO
IT FELT A BIT DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE THAT'S SUCH A HUGE PROBLEM NOW...
BUT I FEEL LIKE THEY'RE AT LEAST IN THE SAME GROUP...
...A WHOLE TEN YEARS AGO ?
...HAVE YOU SEEN IT, TOO?
"TOO?"
HAVE YOU, KITAMURA-SAN?
...YOU HAVE TO WATCH OUT FOR THAT MAN...
...I DON'T THINK HE'S THAT BAD OF A PERSON...
WELL... HE CERTAINLY IS A PRETTY MYSTERIOUS GUY...
THAT, AND I WANTED TO GIVE HIM A LITTLE WARNING.
DOESN'T WEI HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THOSE CAPSULES, TOO?
IT'S THE OTHER WAY AROUND

MR. LOH, DR. WEI HAS ARRIVED
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMING
AND WHO'S THIS?
HE'S A HANDY MAN WHO FREQUENTS MY PLACE
HI—
I'VE BEEN TOLD MOST OF THE SITUATION OVER THE PHONE
ARE YOU INJURED?
IT'S NOT THAT BAD MY MEN JUST CAUSED MORE OF A FUSS THAN WAS REALLY NECESSARY
I'M SURE YOU KNOW THE INTERNATIONAL UNDERGROUND IS PLANNING TO ABSORB THE LOCAL UNDERGROUND GROUPS
AN INTERNAL SCUFFLE?
WE ARE NO EXCEPTION. OUR ORGANIZATION IS SPLIT BETWEEN THOSE FOR THE MERGER AND THOSE AGAINST. AND IT'S LED TO SOME TROUBLE.
SO I BECAME A TARGET FOR THE PRO-MERGER FACTION

COULD YOU TELL ME THE SITUATION IN MORE DETAIL?
...AND BY THAT YOU MEAN...?
THERE'S SOMETHING THAT WORRIES ME
THE INTERNAL SITUATION HERE IS VERY STRANGE
PEOPLE WHO OPPOSED IT ARE SUDDENLY SUPPORTING IT... AND VERY RECENTLY, TOO.
...THE ONE WHO ATTACKED ME HAD BEEN THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION. IT WAS ALMOST LIKE HE'D TURNED INTO AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT PERSON... OR SHOULD I SAY...
A MONSTER...
YOU'VE SEEN THEM, TOO...?
IS THAT WHAT YOU WERE WORRYING ABOUT, DOCTOR?
YES...
YOU MEAN THE ONES THAT DON'T DIE EVEN IF YOU BLAST THEIR HEADS OFF?

IT WAS A MONSTER, I TELL YOU.
EVEN AFTER ITS HEAD HAD BEEN BLASTED OPEN, WITH ITS BRAINS FLYING EVERYWHERE IT STILL CAME RUNNING...
ALMOST AS IF IT WERE BEING CONTROLLED BY SOMETHING NOT OF THIS WORLD
I'M CERTAIN OTHER UNDERGROUND GROUPS HAVE HAD SIMILAR EXPERIENCES
IT'S NOT JUST THIS BUT THOSE CAPSULES AS WELL
THERE'S SOMETHING STRANGE GOING ON WITH THE INTERNATIONALS...
A LITERAL REPLACEMENT OF THE HEAD, IS IT
NOW YOU ARE ESSENTIALLY THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION FACTION, LOH-SAN?
...YES.
WE KNOW THAT IT WAS AN INTERNATIONAL THAT SENT YAKUZA TO KILL THE CHIEF
I'M NOT GOING TO LET THEM HAVE THEIR WAY!
I WAS INDEBTED TO HIM.

IF THAT'S THE CASE...
COULD YOU LEND US YOUR ASSISTANCE?
...
YOU CERTAINLY DID HELP US A GREAT DEAL WITH THE CAPSULES
BUT I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD GET INVOLVED IN THIS, DOCTOR
THIS ISN'T THE TIME FOR THEM TO BE ARGUING OVER SOMETHING LIKE SHANGHAI OR FUJIAN. EITHER THIS IS WHEN WE HAVE TO FORM A UNIFIED FRONT
BUT...
THIS WILL PROBABLY BECOME A FULL-FLEDGED WAR.
WE'VE ALREADY GOTTEN IN CONTACT WITH PEOPLE REMAINING FROM THE OTHER GROUPS
tap
WITH AN ENEMY LIKE THIS, I DOUBT WE CAN WIN BY ANY NORMAL MEANS...
THE "THINGS THAT CAN'T BE SEEN" HAVEN'T JUST BEEN SENT OUT ON A WHIM
I'M SURE THOSE MONSTERS WILL BECOME THEIR WEAPONS

I THINK IT'S THE AFTEREFFECT OF POPPING TOO MANY PILLS...
TAKATOU HERE HAS THE POWER TO SEE THE "THINGS THAT CANNOT BE SEEN."
I'M SURE HE'LL BE OF HELP TO YOU.
YOU CAN SEE THEM...?
.....
WHY ARE YOU AFTER THE INTERNATIONALS DOCTOR?
OH, HE'S DONE A GREAT DEAL FOR ME.
AND HIS FRIEND HAS BEEN ABDUCTED BECAUSE OF SOMETHING DUE TO THE INTERNATIONALS
I JUST WANTED TO HELP HIM OUT.
YOU ARE SUCH A LIAR...

SINCE OUR AIMS COINCIDE
DON'T YOU THINK WE SHOULD POOL OUR RESOURCES TOGETHER?
THERE'S LITTLE I CAN DO, BUT I WOULD BE GLAD TO HELP WHERE I CAN.
tap
...MY FRIEND... IS PROBABLY NO LONGER ALIVE.
HOW DID THAT HAPPEN?
I DON'T KNOW FOR SURE BUT THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO FIND OUT
BUT THE [illegible]TIONALS ARE NOW TARGETING MY SISTER.
I CAN'T JUST SIT BACK AND WATCH
AND I WANT TO TAKE DOWN THOSE MONSTERS MYSELF!
...

EVEN IF WE COUNT THEM ALL, WE ONLY HAVE ABOUT ONE THIRD THE NUMBER OF THE INTERNATIONALS. THE ONLY ONES UNSCATHED SO FAR ARE THE TAIWANESE.
BUT THEY HAVE NO INTENTION OF JOINING WITH US.
THANK YOU.
IT CERTAINLY IS TRUE THAT TAKATOU'S POWERS WOULD BE OF GREAT ASSISTANCE TO US.
...I DON'T THINK THERE SHOULD BE ANY ISSUES.
SO HOW MANY PEOPLE DO YOU HAVE ALTOGETHER?
HAS THE GOOD DOCTOR HAD A DISPUTE WITH THE TAIWANESE?
THAT MAY BE.
AND BY THAT, YOU MEAN—
IT HAPPENED A LONG TIME AGO.
...
MAYBE I SHOULD GO SAY HELLO SOMETIME.
THEIR HEAD DOESN'T LIKE ME POPPING UP EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE AMONGST THE REMNANTS OF THE HONG KONG GROUP, CORRECT?

WELL, IT SEEMS LIKE THE TAIWANESE ARE GOING TO TRY TO STAY NEUTRAL THROUGHOUT IT ALL.
WE JUST HAVE TO PRAY THAT THEY DON'T BECOME AN ENEMY.
THE NUMBER OF MONSTERS LIKE THE ONE THAT ATTACKED YOU WILL LIKELY INCREASE
CAN WE ARRANGE TO MEET THE OTHERS SOMETIME?
YES.
BUT AS LONG AS YOU HAVE MEN AND WEAPONS, YOU SHOULD GET THROUGH IT SOMEHOW.
BANG
I MUST ADMIT, I'M SURPRISED YOU GOT THAT INTO IT.
REALLY, THOUGH ....

I'M FINE WHEN I RUN INTO THOSE FREAKY SHIKIGAMI EVEN THOUGH I CAN SEE THEM
I'VE BECOME DESENSITIZED OR SOMETHING, I SWEAR.
Hmph!
YOU'RE JUST AS STRANGE WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT YOU'D STICK YOUR NOSE IN SOMETHING THIS ABSURD!
PEOPLE BECOME EXTRAORDINARILY CALM IN EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES...
Are you still angry?
NO MORE DITHERING AROUND FOR ME, THANKS.
!
...GO AROUND BEHIND.
HAS SOME LADY'S HUSBAND COME TO SETTLE A SCORE?
Serves you right!

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU
DOCTOR WEI.
TCH...
SURELY YOU DON'T NEED TO GLARE AT ME LIKE THAT
I JUST HAVE A SMALL FAVOR TO ASK OF YOU
I'M AFRAID I DON'T RECALL KNOWING SOMEONE LIKE YOU.
WHAT DO YOU WANT?

I GUESS THAT MEANS YOU'VE SEEN THROUGH US?
WELL, THAT SIMPLIFIES THINGS.
HONESTLY LOOK AT THAT ATTITUDE YOU'RE TAKING
I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU HEARD THAT.
IT'S JUST A LITTLE SOMETHING I'D LIKE YOUR HELP WITH.
YOU'RE PRETTY BIG AROUND HERE, AREN'T YOU?
WHY DON'T YOU JOIN US?
GO BACK AND TELL YOUR BOSS...
TO SEND SOMEONE A BIT SMARTER TO RUN ERRANDS LIKE THIS.

DAMN...
CLANG
JUST WHO THE HELL IS THAT GUY...?
YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF CLEAN-UP AS WELL AS INVITES, AREN'T YOU? YOU REEK OF IT
HOW VERY FEISTY OF YOU... LOOKS LIKE I'M NOT AS WELL LIKED AS I'D HOPED
BUT I DON'T THINK YOU'RE ALL TOO SMART YOURSELF
FFSHH
OUR PRINCESS HOPES TO BE FRIENDS WITH YOU...
BUT I DON'T LIKE IT WHEN THINGS GET TROUBLE-SOME LIKE THIS...
AV
OOSH

THE "THINGS THAT CANNOT BE SEEN!"
HEY... SEEN ONE BEFORE? YOU KNOW, THEY'RE REAL POPULAR NOWADAYS
...
...!
WOW!
YOU'RE PRETTY SHARP AREN'T YOU!

JUST WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT?
BUT IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT...
I'M AFRAID YOU WON'T FIND ONE.
I JUST THOUGHT I'D ASK.
OH? ARE YOU READY TO LISTEN NOW?
--THE REVERSAL OF YIN AND YANG.
THE UNDERWORLD STRIKING BACK!

WHAT...?!
WEI, BEHIND YOU!!
sfx: bang
ANG

THUD
CLANG
WE HAVE THE POWER TO CRUSH YOU. WHY DO YOU STILL DEFY US?
ALL RIGHT. MY TURN TO ASK YOU..

I'D SAY IT'S 'CAUSE I DON'T LIKE YOUR FACE!
HAM
WELL... IF I HAD TO ANSWER...
SLASH
...!
SO YOU'RE THE ONE CONTROLLING THE "THINGS THAT CANNOT BE SEEN?"

THE LEADER OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION IS A DOLL USER?
...QUITE A SPIRITED FRIEND YOU'VE GOT HERE DOC...
I'D RATHER YOU USE THE TERM "DOLL MASTER"...
...!!
LOOKS LIKE I HAVE TO TELL THE PRINCESS THAT IT DIDN'T PAN OUT
!
SEE YA, DOCTOR.

GET THEM.
THIS WAY, ELECTRICIAN!
SHIT...!
Whoa!
ETIC DAWN KS
THAT BASTARD LET LOOSE ANOTHER THREE OF 'EM!
IF I RECALL CORRECTLY, NIMIYA...
CAN DIG UP UNDERGROUND CABLES OR PIPES OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT, RIGHT?
HUH? YEAH I THINK SO...

ANYWAY IT MEANS THAT PHYSICAL ATTACKS WORK ON THEM
EVEN IF WE CAN'T BLAST THEM TO BITS
IF WE CAN ONLY STOP THEIR MOVEMENTS WE'LL HAVE A SHOT AT GETTING OUT OF THIS
ELECTRICIAN, THEY'RE COMING ONE AT A TIME, RIGHT?
ARE THERE ANY AROUND ME?
THREE METERS AWAY... COMING RIGHT AT YOU!
sfx: whaak
!!!
sfx: wuwah

SEAL IT!
...IT'S GONE.

BURY THOSE SOMEWHERE AFTER-WARDS...
BUT NIMIYA WAS RIGHT. YELLOW SEEMS TO WORK ON THEM.
I WASN'T SURE WHETHER TO BELIEVE IT OR NOT...
IT'S CALLED MAKING SNAP JUDG-MENTS
Can't underestimate him!
...!!!
I SUS-PECTED IT A LONG TIME AGO, BUT DOC...
YOU REALLY ARE SOMEONE WHO ACTS BEFORE THINKING, AREN'T YOU
WHO KNOWS WHAT THEY'RE AFTER?
WE SHOULD JUST ASK THAT DOLL MASTER...
...I DON'T GET HIM, EITHER.
BUT YOU KNOW... I DON'T GET IT.
WHAT DID HE MEAN BY "THE REVERSAL OF YIN AND YANG"...?

HE'S BEEN SIDESTEPPING THE ISSUE THE WHOLE TIME
WHAT IS WEI GETTING HIMSELF INVOLVED IN THIS FOR...?
BANG

IT DIDN'T LOOK LIKE HE WAS GOING TO LISTEN TO ME ANYTIME SOON
OH... I GUESS IT CAN'T BE HELPED THEN...
WELL I FEEL A BIT BETTER NOW THAT WE'VE GOTTEN HIM OUT OF OUR WAY
I DEALT WITH HIM
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU HAD A BIT OF A TOUGH TIME
DID YOU ACTUALLY HAVE ANY INTENTION AT ALL OF TRYING TO WIN HIM OVER?
OF COURSE I DID! BUT THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO [illegible] SOMEONE THAT STUBBORN
DON'T LET HIS LOOKS FOOL YOU HE'S AS HOT-BLOODED AS THEY COME
...THIS MAN...
WHAT?
THE MAN IN THIS PHOTO NEXT TO THAT WEI GUY

WHAT?!
BANG
I'VE LOST THE SIGNALS OF THE SHIKIGAMI THAT YOU SENT
MASTER!
WHAT'S UP, IRA?
FU XIAO...
WAS HE THERE, TOO?
OH...
SO HE'S THE ONE WITH THAT DOLL MASTER THE IRREGULAR? DAMN IT...!
YOU DIDN'T REALIZE? I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE SUCH A FOOL
...
HE WAS WITH WEI BEFORE...
THIS GUY CAN SEE SHIKIGAMI!

WHAT...?
HIS HIGHNESS SHOWED UP?
SO HE'S THE ONE WHO GOT IN CONTACT WITH HIS HIGHNESS... THE HUMAN WHO CAN SEE?
I DON'T KNOW, THAT'S WHY I'M INVESTIGATING THINGS RIGHT NOW!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE FU XIAO?!
WHAT IS HIS HIGHNESS' OBJECTIVE HERE?
FROM THE VERY FACT THAT HE LEFT THE COUNCIL OF SPIRITS, IT'S OBVIOUS THAT HE MEANS NO GOOD FOR US
IT SEEMS LIKE HIS HIGHNESS KNEW THE ONE WHO CAN SEE TOO...
WEI AND THE MAN WHO CAN SEE... AND THE IRREGULAR DOLL MASTER. SO THEY HAVE INDIRECT CONTACT WITH HIS HIGHNESS...
THIS IS BAD... JUST HOW DEEPLY INVOLVED ARE THEY WITH HIS HIGHNESS...?

HIS HIGHNESS HAS BEEN KEEPING A VERY LOW PROFILE...
IF THE PEOPLE OF THE YIN AND HIS HIGHNESS' CLASS MADE ANY MOVES
THEN YOU WOULD KNOW ABOUT IT PLENTY EARLY, RIGHT?
YES... THAT'S TRUE
THEN IT LOOKS LIKE THE INVASION OF THE YANG WON'T GO SO EASILY, EITHER.
...I'VE BEEN THINKING
IF THEY DO DECIDE TO STAND IN OUR WAY...
COULD IT BE THAT THERE'S A REASON HE CAN'T MAKE ANY MOVES HIMSELF?
I WONDER. HE'S ABOUT AS USEFUL AS A LAMP IN BROAD DAYLIGHT
HE CAN SEE THEM, BUT IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HE HAS ANY OTHER USE...
THE POSSIBILITY EXISTS...
IS WEI...
MORE IMPORTANT THAN HIM...
DID HE CONTACT THE MAN WHO CAN SEE... IN SEARCH OF PAWNS?

IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN IT'S EASY
WE CAN'T RULE OUT THAT POSSIBILITY
THE IRREGULAR DOLL MASTER IS FRIENDS WITH THE MAN WHO CAN SEE
IF THE "EYES," THE "WEAPON" AND THE BRAIN THAT DIRECTS THEM COME AS A SET, THEN USING THEM IN YOUR PLACE IS IDEAL.
AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT I WOULD DO
WE JUST HAVE TO TAKE AWAY THEIR WEAPON.
WHOA, HOLD IT. YOU MEAN...
I'LL CATCH THE DOLL MASTER.
EVEN IF YOU HAVE THE EYES AND THE BRAIN, THEY'RE USELESS WITHOUT THE WEAPON.
THAT'S OKAY, RIGHT, HAIRAN?
SO WE REMOVE THE MOST WORRISOME FACTOR.

DO YOU KNOW THAT DOLL MASTER?
YOU COULD SAY THAT.
...AS LONG AS WE CAN GET HOLD OF THE 3 POINTS OF THE YANG...
AND FORTUNATELY... WE'VE ALREADY GOT ONE OF THEM.
NO MATTER WHAT HIS HIGHNESS DOES, WE HAVE THE ADVANTAGE
IN ORDER TO HURRY OUR SEARCH FOR THE REMAINING TWO...
WE'VE SHOULD HASTEN THE SHINJUKU REDEVELOPMENT.
BUT HE MIGHT BECOME AN OBSTACLE... THAT DOCTOR.
WEI LEI YUAN...
IS INDEED QUITE AN ANNOYANCE...

Continued in Kagutsu 4

KUGUTSU: A SERIES NOTE

THOUGH THIS VOLUME ENDS WITH A "TO BE CONTINUED IN VOLUME 4" BLURB, KUGUTSU VOLUME 4 WAS NEVER PRINTED. THERE IS SOME CONFUSION ABOUT TAKAHASHI AKIRA'S WORKS AND THE KUGUTSU STORYLINE, SO I WILL CLARIFY THAT HERE.

THE THREE KUGUTSU VOLUMES WERE ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE MID TO LATE 90S BY KOUBUNSHA, CONCURRENTLY WITH THE NOVEL SERIES BY THE SAME NAME. THE MAGAZINE IT WAS IN CEASED PUBLICATION, SO IT WAS LEFT HANGING AT VOLUME 3. LATER, IN 2004, SHINSHOKAN ACQUIRED THE SERIES AND REPRINTED THE THREE VOLUMES IN PREPARATION FOR THE SEQUEL, KUGUTSU HARD LINK. STORM IN HEAVEN SCANLATED VOLUMES 1-2 FROM THE ORIGINAL PUBLICATION, AND WE DID VOLUME 3 FROM THE REPRINT (YOU'LL HAVE NOTICED THE DISCREPANCIES IN COVER STYLE). THE ORIGINAL THREE VOLUMES (KOUBUNSHA RELEASE) ACTUALLY CONTAINED 10 CHAPTERS. THE 10TH CHAPTER WAS CUT FROM THE SHINSHOKAN REPRINT. THIS WAS DONE BECAUSE THE 10TH CHAPTER FOLLOWS THE NOVEL SERIES AND LEADS INTO NOVEL #4. IT WAS DECIDED FOR EVENTS IN THE MANGA AND THE NOVEL SERIES TO DIVERGE TO SOME DEGREE IN THE SEQUEL (HARD LINK), AND THUS CHAPTER 10 WAS CUT TO ALLOW FOR A SEAMLESS TRANSITION TO THE SEQUEL. SO CHAPTER 9, THE FINAL CHAPTER IN THIS REPRINT, LEADS DIRECTLY INTO THE SEQUEL. THIS REPRINT VOLUME ENDS WITH AN UNRELATED SHORT STORY INSTEAD OF THAT 10TH CHAPTER.

AFTER THE ORIGINAL PUBLICATION OF KUGUTSU HAD CEASED, TAKAHASHI AKIRA PUBLISHED KUGUTSUGI WITH THE PUBLISHER SHUEISHA. THIS IS NOT THE SEQUEL TO KUGUTSU. RATHER, IT IS AN ADAPTATION OF THE SAME STORY, WITH THE SAME CHARACTERS CAST IN DIFFERENT ROLES. FOR INSTANCE, WEI, NIMIYA, AND THE ELECTRICIAN ARE ALL THERE, BUT THE DOLL MASTER, THE ONE WHO CAN SEE THE SHIKIGAMI, ETC, ARE PLAYED BY A DIFFERENT MAIN CHARACTER. KUGUTSUGI STARTS BACK AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MYSTERY AND HAS A VERY SIMILAR STORYLINE. HOWEVER, KUGUTSUGI RAN FOR FOUR VOLUMES BUT DIDN'T REACH A CONCLUSION; LIKE KUGUTSU, IT WAS LEFT HANGING.

KUGUTSU HARD LINK IS A DIRECT SEQUEL TO KUGUTSU (REPRINT EDITION). IT DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ANY EVENTS IN THE KUGUTSUGI ADAPTATION. THUS KUGUTSU/HARD LINK AND KUGUTSUGI ARE COMPLETELY SEPARATE STORIES. AS OF EARLY 2010, THE KUGUTSUGI STORYLINE DOES NOT HAVE A SEQUEL.

STORM IN HEAVEN WILL BE CONTINUING THE KUGUTSU STORY AND SCANLATING KUGUTSU HARD LINK. WE WILL NOT BE DOING KUGUTSUGI, SINCE IT'S AN ADAPTATION THAT DOESN'T HAVE A CONCLUSION ITSELF.

SEE YOU IN KUGUTSU HARD LINK!

REGARDS,
THE STORM IN HEAVEN STAFF

WINGS COMICS

KUGUTSU

傀儡

高橋明

3

新書館

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新書館◆定価：本体520円＋税

教えてください人形師、オレはどこに、何故、閉じこめられていたんですか？
丹宮の悲痛な心の叫びが新宿の夕空を染める

こんな力を持つオレは“どこの誰なんですか？”

「驚いたな、君が傀儡師だったなんて」

丹宮の力を目の当たりにしたティエウはそう言って彼女に手を差し出した。
だが、その手をとれば人形師に逢えるのか――？

あの欠けた六芒星のかたちをした血のりを見てから強迫観念じみた焦燥感に悩まされる電気屋。
そしてひどくしつこい頭痛と丹宮に似た男の幻覚。電気屋は叫ぶ。

「おまえは必ず俺が守ってやる」

――やがて明かされていく謎の医者一味の過去とは!?

新宿を舞台に鬼才 高橋明が描く、空前絶後のハードデイズ・オブ ダークネス、新装版第三弾!!
単行本未収録の幻の原稿「ありがちな日常」を併録。

KUGUTSU

volume 03 extra

Scanned by *Kalendel*
Translated by *Delilaryn*
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STORM IN HEAVEN

http://www.stormnheaven.org

Regular Everyday
arigachi na nichijo

A LONG TIME AGO WHEN I WAS JUST A KID I SPENT ALL MY TIME WITH THE SENA FAMILY THREE HOUSES DOWN
THEY HAD A SON TWO YEARS OLDER THAN ME NAMED NANAKI WHO WAS THE VERY EPITOME OF MANHOOD AND SINCE WE WERE BOTH ONLY CHILDREN, WE PLAYED TOGETHER LIKE BROTHERS
JUST A MENTAL IMAGE
NANAKI COULD DO ANYTHING HE WAS AN AWESOME GUY, SOMEONE YOU COULD RELY ON A HERO TO ME — LIKE A BROTHER I LOOKED UP TO
BUT WHEN I WAS IN 5TH GRADE HE MOVED TO AOMORI
ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME SHINPA-CHI?
HIS MOTHER JUST GOT A JOB ABROAD LIKE HIS FATHER, SO NANAKI-KUN WILL BE STAYING IN JAPAN AND I THOUGHT WHY DOESN'T HE JUST STAY WITH US, SINCE—
AND NOW, NANAKI-SAMA
IS COMING BACK

1 & 3 can result in accidents so please do not try at home
WHAT COMES TO MIND ARE MEMORIES OF MY DAZZLING BOYHOOD DAYS WITH NANAKI-SAMA
Un cycle — speed down the hill. A mountain dare.
NAKAKI-SAMA ALWAYS GOT SCRATCHES ALL OVER HIS BODY
AND HE WORE THE SCABS LIKE BADGES OF MANHOOD!
OH, FOR THOSE FULFILLING DAYS TO RETURN!
Rock Straw! — put straw in rock's behind and blow it up like a balloon
Water Game — throw water balloons at people and cars
NOW THAT NANAKI-SAMA IS 15, I'M SURE HE'S A RIPPED, MACHO, NICE GUY
THE TWO OF US WILL TALK LIKE LONG-LOST BROTHERS!!
clench
Are we treasure?
Err, right, Nanaki
Hmmm
Ah, that does it
ding dong
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
OH, SEE, SHIN-PACHI NANAKI-KUN S
IF NANAKI-SAMA IS DOING DAILY MORNING TRAINING,
THEN I'LL JOIN HIM STARTING TOMORROW, AND...

BAM
NANA-SAMA!!
HACHI!!

CUT IT OUT.
she's not here
HUH?
HOW ABOUT A "HELLO," HUH?
OH!
NANAKI-SAMA, YOU HAVEN'T GROWN AT ALL...
BONK
Ow!
SHUT UP!
xu tug
WELCOME, NANAKI-KUN! PLEASE MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME!
HEY, THANKS FOR LETTING ME STAY!
I need a painkiller or something. Ha ha ha

CAN I REALLY HAVE A ROOM THIS BIG ALL TO MYSELF?
OF COURSE! WE WEREN'T USING IT IF YOU NEED ANYTHING, JUST LET US KNOW...
HACHI... WHAT'RE YOU DOING, STARING AT ME THIS WHOLE TIME?
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE ANGRY THAT I ONLY WROTE YOU ONE LETTER TO THE 27 THAT YOU WROTE ME?
Let me tell you you're torturing yourself if you really expect a non-writer to actually answer your letters.
NO, IT'S JUST THAT THE BIG, TOUGH IMAGE YOU USED TO HAVE...
I DID A REAL NUMBER ON MY BACK RIGHT AFTER WE MOVED. AND THAT WAS THE END OF MY SOCCER CAREER...
OH THAT
I GUESS IT'S TRUE THAT YOU GOTTA EXERCISE WHILE YOU'RE GROWING OR YOU WON'T GROW MUCH AT ALL...

BUT YOU REALLY HAVE GROWN HAVEN'T YOU HACHI! I PRACTICALLY HAVE TO LOOK UP AT YOU!
AND TO THINK YOU USED TO BE THIS LITTLE PUNK ALWAYS FOLLOWING ME AROUND!!
SHIT ...
I SHOULDN'T HAVE PACKED A BOX FULL OF BOOKS!!
OOM PH!
AND HIS SOFT, PALE HAIR!
HELP OUT A LITTLE HACHI!

YOU KNOW
PLUCK

I REALLY WAS..
LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AGAIN.

ALL RIGHT I'M GONNA MAKE THIS ROOM LIVABLE BY THE END OF THE DAY!
THIS IS NOSTALGIC!
THERE ARE THREE MORE OF THOSE BOXES, HACHI, SO TAKE CARE OF 'EM, WOULD YA?
...THAT WAS...
I...
THE MIRACULOUS MOMENT...
THAT THE HERO-WORSHIP OF MY YOUTH CHANGED TO LOVE.
WILL PROTECT HIM!
From whom? You may want to use that elsewhere.

I'LL PROTECT YOU, NANAKI-SAMA.
THAT SMILE, THAT YOU SHOW YOU CRADLE YOUR EMOTIONAL SCARS LIKE FLOWERS DEEP IN YOUR HEART.
THAT SMILE HAS MADE MY HEART STRIKE OUT.
.....AH...
NANAKI-SAMA HOW YOU MAKE MY HEART BOUNCE.
HEY, DON'T JUST STAND THERE SPACING OUT, HACHIKO!

ALL RIGHT!
already dark.
WE'VE MANAGED TO GET THIS PLACE A BIT ORGANIZED. GOOD JOB, HACHI!
I'M TAKING A BATH!
Ahh...
enraptured
THIS IS WHERE NANAKI-SAMA'S GOING TO LIVE FROM NOW ON... FOREVER...
AND MAKE SURE YOU VACUUM, TOO!
Did almost everything
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, SELF? HOW INCOMPETENT! HOW WORTHLESS! HOW DARE I INCONVENIENCE NANAKI-SAMA?!
...WAIT, WE DIDN'T GET OUT ANY BATH TOWELS FOR HIM, DID WE..
HEY, HACHI! WE HAVEN'T TAKEN A BATH TOGETHER IN AGES, WANNA JOIN ME?
JOLT
CLICK
NANAKI-SAMA, SORRY I FORGOT ABOUT THE TOWE-

HACHI?
FLEE
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, HACHI?!
BLUSH
WHAT AM I DOING?!
I CANNOT BRING MYSELF TO LAY MY EYES UPON NANAKI-SAMA'S BARE FLESH!!!
huff huff huff huff huff huff huff
UGH!
SPEW

COULD IT BE...
THAT WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING IT, I ALREADY HARBOR WICKED, IMPURE THOUGHTS?!
I AM A BEAST!
.....
THIS IS THE BED WHERE NANAKI-SAMA WILL SLEEP...
touch
...AH...
NANAKI-SAMA'S JACKET...
wobble wobble

SNIFF
SNIFF
SNIFF
SNIFF
SNIFF
SNIFF
NANAKI-SAMA'S SCENT.....
I CAN'T LET...
.....NANAKI-SAMA FIND OUT ABOUT THESE FEELINGS.....
ARE YOU OKA...
WHAT'S UP, HACHI?

GYAAAAA!
GYAAAAAAA!
RUN AWAY
HACHI ... ..?
GYAAAAAAAA!!!
WHY ARE YOU RUN-NING, HACHI? !!!
dash dash dash dash
GyAAAAA!
Hachi

OH, GOOD MORNING, NANAKI-KUN.
MORN-IN'!
HEY WHERE'S HACHIKO?
HE LEFT EARLY. HE SAID HE HAD SOMETHING TO DO, THOUGH I HAVEN'T THE SLIGHTEST IDEA WHAT.
AND THE TWO OF YOU ARE EVEN GOING TO THE SAME SCHOOL
SO YOU COULD HAVE GONE TOGETHER. WHAT A STRANGE BOY HE IS
And he was so looking forward to it!
.....
HUH?
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?
HON-ESTLY. HACHI YOU BAS-TARD.

HEY!
SENA!
YOU'RE SENA NANAKI, AREN'T YOU?
WHAT, SENSEI! THIS IS WHERE YOU STARTED TEACHING? WOW...
WHAT, DID YOU TRANS-FER HERE? AREN'T YOU A THIRD-YEAR?
...!
HAMADA-SENSEI?
Ugh...
WELL, SINCE YOU ASKED, YOU GET TO HEAR ALL ABOUT IT.
WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU DON'T LOOK TOO GOOD

HMPH!
Aha ha ha
ha ha ha ha
WHAT'S THE MATTER, SHINPAT-CHAN?
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR USUAL BIZARRE ENTHUSIASM? DIARRHEA?
WHEN DID YOU BECOME SO GROWN UP?
OH, BUT TO THINK, SHINPAT-CHAN IS HAVING LOVE TROU-BLES!
Aha ha ha!
DON'T WORRY.
JUST DO IT!! (IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.)
YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND THE SENSITIVE, DELICATE HEART OF A MAN CAUGHT BETWEEN FRIEND-SHIP AND LOVE!
MY LOLIT FRIEND #1 WOULDN'T UNDER-STAND.
Ha ha ha! You're such an idiot
SENSITIVE AND DELICATE MEAN THE SAME THING, SHINPAT-CHAN!

I— I HAD NO IDEA THAT YOU WERE SUCH A— A SHAMELESS BEAST!
Pat
ha ha ha h
THERE'S NO POINT IN AN IDIOT LIKE YOU WASTING TIME THINKING JUST TAKE ACTION!
GO FOR IT, SHIN-PAT-CHAN!!
HEY, HEY SHINPACHI, I SAW YOUR RUMORED BIG BROTHER FIGURE
HE'S GIRLIER THAN I HEARD. THOUGH KIND OF STRINGY, ACTUALLY.
WHAT?!
WHERE WAS HE DOING WHAT HOW?!
NO, WELL, HE WENT INTO THE COUNSELOR'S ROOM PRACTICALLY ARM-IN-ARM WITH THE NEW TEACHER.
OH, THE GUY WHO GOT THROWN TO US BECAUSE HE WAS MESSING AROUND WITH STUDENTS RIGHT?!
Yeah, that's the one!
Ha ha ha ha ha
WHAAAAA?!!

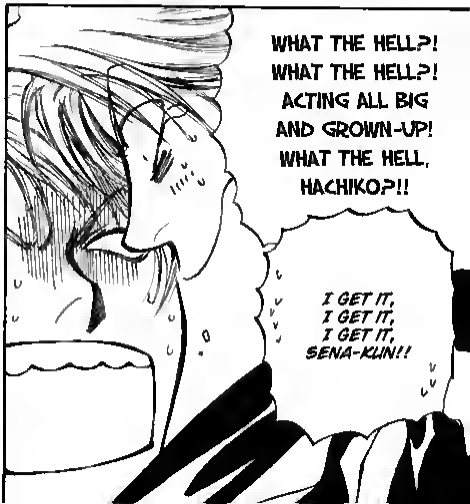
MY FAULT
MY FAULT
MY FAULT
MY FAULT
OH, NANAKI-SAMA, COULD IT BE THAT BECAUSE OF ME... IT'S MY FAULT!
DAMN IT ALL TO HELL! IF YOU'RE GONNA BE DONE BY SOME SHAMELESS STRANGER,
THEN IT'D BE A MILLION TIMES BETTER TO BE DONE BY SOMEONE YOU'VE KNOWN FOR-EVER LIKE ME!!
...SO HIS NAME'S SHINPACHI.
Counselor's Office
What's up with that twisted interpreta-tion of his?
So the person he likes is that infamous older brother figure?
He's almost pitiful, being honest to himself.

WHEN WE WERE KIDS, HE WAS THIS ANNOYING LITTLE BRAT WHO FOLLOWED ME AROUND ALL THE TIME
SO REALLY, HE JUST GOT ON MY NERVES.
EVEN IF I HIT HIM OR KICKED HIM, HE NEVER LEARNED. HE JUST KEPT ON STICKING TO ME.
NANA-CHAN!
AND EVEN I'M NOT THAT HUGE OF A MONSTER
NANA-NII-CHAN...
I CAME TO LOVE HIM LIKE A LITTLE BROTHER.
NANA-CHAN!
LISTEN UP. STARTING TODAY, I'LL FORMALLY ACKNOWLEDGE YOU AS MY SERVANT.
YAY! THANK YOU, NANAKI-SAMA!
CALL ME NANAKI-SAMA, AND I'LL CALL YOU HACHIKO.
NOT THAT I CARE,
BUT YOU'RE REALLY KIND OF A BULLY AREN'T YOU
I WAS REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO COMING BACK HERE...

ba
AND YET, THAT IDIOT!
WHAT THE HELL!!

HE'S JUST A STUPID, IDIOT SERVANT! HOW DARE HE TREAT ME LIKE THAT!
HE'S SO COLD! SO STANDOFFISH! HE GOES RUNNING WHEN HE SEES ME!

CALM DOWN, OKAY?
huff
huff
huff
Wow you can be scary


WHAT THE HELL?! WHAT THE HELL?! ACTING ALL BIG AND GROWN-UP! WHAT THE HELL, HACHIKO?!!
I GET IT, I GET IT, I GET IT, SENA-KUN!!

bang
stare
AH...
HACHI...?!

Huh?!
whack
JOH
MEET YOUR DIVINE PUNISH-MENT!!
WHY
HACHI
GLARE
Rage!!
YOU IDIOT! CUT IT OUT, HACHI!!
GAAH, DAMN IT ALL!!!
SMACK
SMACK
SMACK
Urgh

I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU,
NANA-KI-SAMA !!!
I THINK ALL KINDS OF PERVERTED THINGS WHEN I'M AROUND YOU.
THAT'S HOW IN LOVE WITH YOU I AM, NANAKI-SAMA...

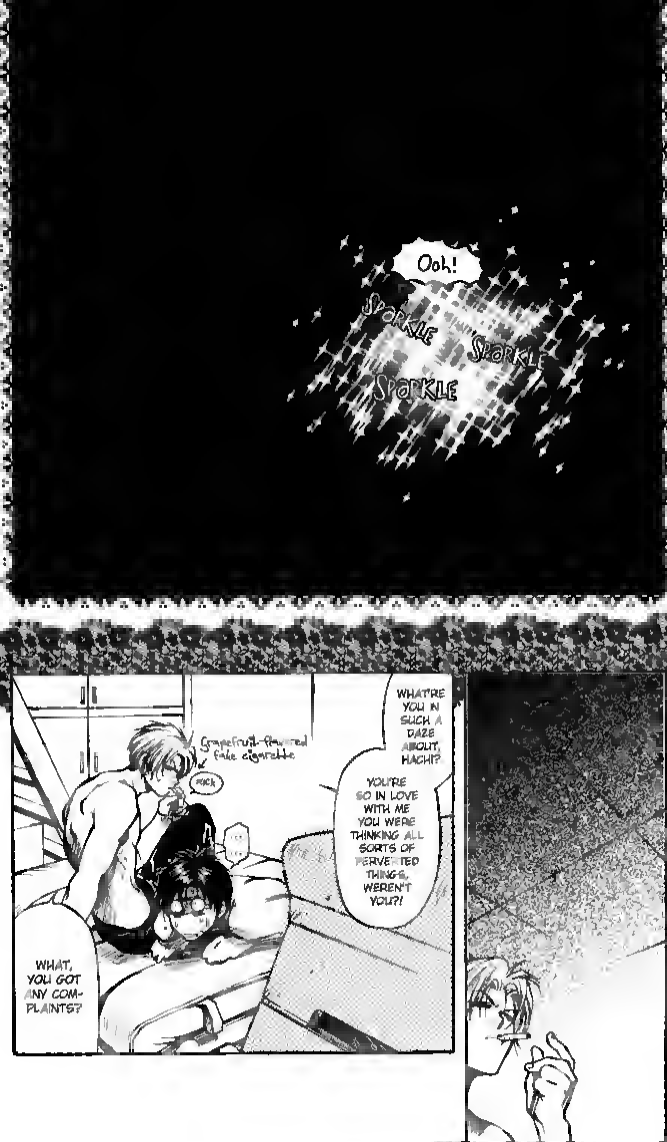
...SO THAT'S WHY YOU WERE AVOIDING ME
I NEVER WOULD HAVE THOUGHT YOU WERE LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT.
COME WITH ME, HACHI!
THE. THE RAM-PAGES OF YOUTH
NANAKI-S/M...
...WHAT AN UTTER MORON YOU ARE, HACHI.

...
THE GATE OUT OF THE BAR
I CAN'T GO BACK NOW.
NO.
I WILL NOT !!
NANAKI-SAMA!
HACHI!!
IT CER-TAINLY IS TRUE..
THAT I ADORED THE LITTLE KID WHO ALWAYS FOLLOWED ME AROUND...
FREEZE
SOIL
FWIP

NANAKI-SAMA.
I SUPPOSE IT'S NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO FORCE THESE KINDS OF FEELINGS
THOSE PALE, ALMOST TREMBLING CHEEKS...
BUT THAT INNER STRENGTH AND COURAGE ARE JUST THE SAME AS THEY WERE WHEN WE WERE YOUNG—.
NANAKI-SAMA IS NO LONGER THE BROTHER FIGURE I ONCE THOUGHT HIM TO BE...

ばっ
NANAKI-SAMA...
WHAT'S THE MATTER, HACHI?

YOU ACTUALLY HAVE QUITE THE FINE BODY.
...?
YEAH OF COURSE!
crack crack //
I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DO SPORTS, BUT I'VE NEVER SLACKED ON WEIGHT TRAINING
THOUGH I SUPPOSEDLY LOOK LIKE A SKINNY WEAKLING WHEN I'M DRESSED!
Well now.
COME ON, HACHI
LET'S LOVE EACH OTHER.
OH...

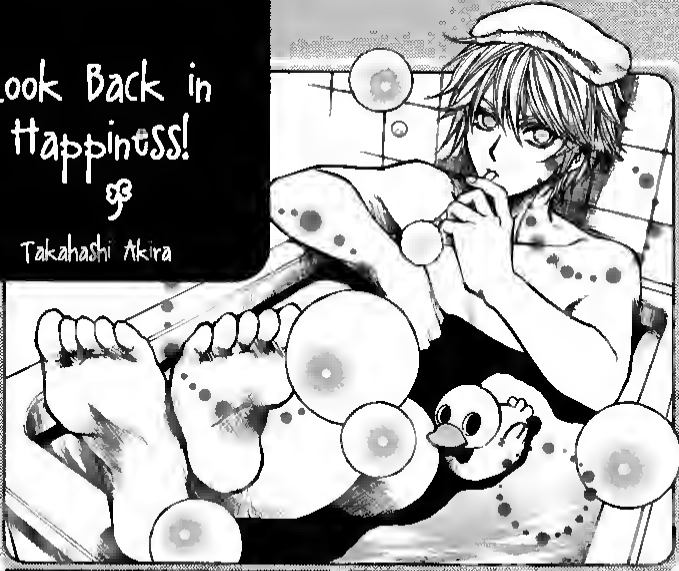

Ooh!
SPARKLE
SPARKLE
SPARKLE
Grapefruit-flavored fake cigarette
KICK
WHAT'RE YOU IN SUCH A DAZE ABOUT, HACHI?
YOU'RE SO IN LOVE WITH ME YOU WERE THINKING ALL SORTS OF PERVERTED THINGS, WEREN'T YOU?!
WHAT, YOU GOT ANY COMPLAINTS?

MY PRECIOUS EPHEMERAL NANAKI SAMA
WHAT HAPPENED TO MY DEAR, FLOWER-LIKE NANAKI-SAMA.
YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF CONVINCED OF SOME PRETTY BIZARRE SHIT, HAVEN'T YOU?
YOU'RE JUST AS MUCH OF AN IDIOT AS YOU WERE BEFORE WELL.. NOT THAT I MIND.
...OH, NANAKI-SAMA.
I'LL TAKE EVEN BETTER CARE OF YOU..
THAN I EVER HAVE HACHI
LOVE..
THAT IS THE SWEET, HEART-RENDING
FLOWER OF GREEN, NEW SPRING
Regular Everyday
E N D

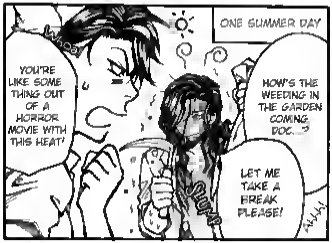
MEET YOUR DIVINE PUNISH-MENT!!
whack

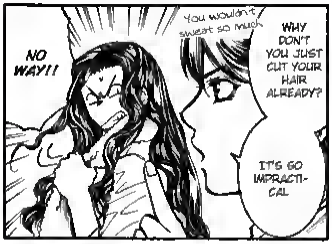
Look Back in Happiness!

Takahashi Akira


A FEW WEEKS LATER
He gives it water, gives it fertilizer, adds supports, etc.
POUR
Ho-ho-ho!
THIRD PLACE PRIZE: A MINI TOMATO FARM SET
Get me some alcohol
A LOTTERY IN THE SHOPPING DISTRICT
ALL RIGHT, I'LL DO IT!
YEAH, THIS'LL NEVER WORK.
TOSS
PON!
A FEW DAYS LATER
FINE, YOU GIVE IT WATER
WHAT, IT'S DRY AGAIN?
TV
DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU WOULD DO IT?
IT GREW! LOOK, TOMATOES GREW!

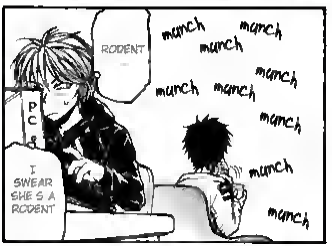
Too defenseless


ONE SUMMER DAY
YOU'RE LIKE SOME THING OUT OF A HORROR MOVIE WITH THIS HEAT!
HOW'S THE WEEDING IN THE GARDEN COMING DOC...?
LET ME TAKE A BREAK PLEASE!
AHHH



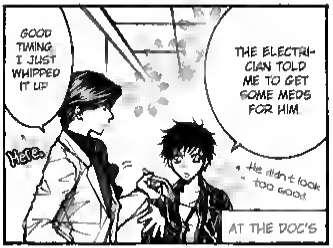
WHY DO THEY HAVE TO SHAM-POO LIKE THAT?
You're doing something right, Kojiro-san!
I can't believe it!
...DO YOU HATE THE BEAUTY SALON SO VERY MUCH?

Steel Trap

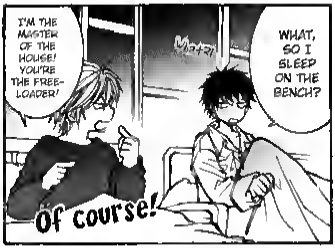


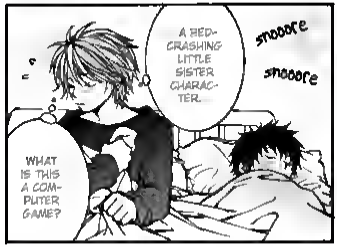
sfx Graaaa!

But I'm really angry!



A little bit of longing

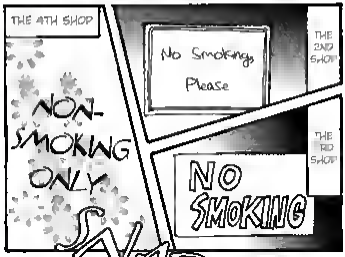


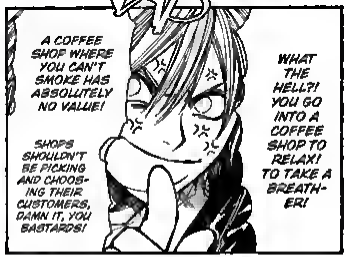


Liquor from Saga Prefecture

END!

The Loser – Tears of Blood and the Cries of the Soul




SAD
A COFFEE SHOP WHERE YOU CAN'T SMOKE HAS ABSOLUTELY NO VALUE!
SHOPS SHOULDN'T BE PICKING AND CHOOSING THEIR CUSTOMERS, DAMN IT, YOU BASTARDS!
WHAT THE HELL?! YOU GO INTO A COFFEE SHOP TO RELAX! TO TAKE A BREATHER!

ALL RIGHT COME ON, LET'S GO TO MCDONALD'S!
DON'T GET ALL HOITY-TOITY JUST 'CAUSE YOU'RE A BIT FANCY!!
You're an embar-rassment
Asses!
Jerkoffs!
Hmph!